

MUSEUM NEWS

JANUARY
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SAMSON AND THE PHILISTINE

GIOVANNI DA BOLOGNA (1524-1608)

GIFT OF EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY, 1952

THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART
FOUNDED BY EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE BRONZES



DETAIL, SAMSON AND THE PHILISTINE

THE TASTE for small, beautifully made bronze figure sculptures is an old one and probably reached its peak in Italy about four hundred years ago. Two distinguished examples of these Italian Renaissance bronzes have recently entered the collection of this Museum. The earlier group, Hercules and Antaeus, was made by an unknown Florentine sculptor about 1500, while the other group, Samson struggling with a Philistine, is the work of Giovanni da Bologna and was undoubtedly created more than fifty years later.

Bronze, which is an alloy of approximately nine parts tin to one of copper, has been prized by men since the earliest civilizations. It is easy to pour in its molten state, and

when hard is relatively durable. Most small Renaissance bronzes, including our two, were cast by the "lost wax" process. A mold around an original model covered with wax is made. The wax is melted out from between the model and the mold, and molten bronze poured in. The result was a hollow bronze figure, usually filed, chiselled, and finished by hand, and then toned with acid, lacquers or varnish to produce the rich surface patina, so prized by all collectors.

Florence, the center of the early Renaissance in Italy, first developed an interest in small bronzes. The Medici and their followers eagerly sought as decoration for their palaces these small sculptures. Artists such as Pollaiuolo and Verrocchio turned periodically from their more monumental works to these small figures in which there was opportunity for fantasy, ornamentation, and occasional playfulness.

While the subjects of these bronzes were usually taken from the antique, as befitted the Renaissance revival of interest in classic culture, the artists often used these subjects only as an excuse to represent the human nude in positions of muscular contortion.

We must remember in looking at our group of Hercules and Antaeus that the anonymous sculptor, whoever he may have been, was part of a civilization which had only very recently re-learned enough about the human

body to represent these two wrestling figures with anatomic exactitude. He was proud of this knowledge, and displayed it with a virtuosity and vitality usually reserved to those who see things freshly and for the first time. This is the work of a man who, although inspired by the classic past, has turned to the scientific learning of his own time for his dominant inspiration.

The second group, Samson struggling with a Philistine, created at least a half century later, is much more sophisticated, polished, and is almost mannered. Giovanni da Bologna, to whom this bronze is attributed by Planiscig, was a young artist from northern France or Flanders who came to Florence as a student, and remained to become the foremost producer of small bronzes during the late Renaissance. His work was popular with his contemporaries, and has remained popular with collectors ever since. In many instances these later bronzes were cast in several replicas, but our piece is not known in any other specimen. The artist has used the Biblical story of Samson's epic struggle to demonstrate his skill in modelling, his knowledge of anatomy, and his study of classic prototypes. He has finished the piece with a transparent and bright lacquer of a quality rarely seen.

Both sculptures, the more direct earlier example, and the somewhat more academic later example, help us to understand at once the knowledge, the skill, and the luxury of the Italian Renaissance.



HERCULES AND ANTAEUS
ITALIAN, C. 1500
GIFT OF EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY, 1952

SHOWN IN THE LOUVRE

TWO DELICIOUS and worldly still-life paintings done about three hundred years ago in the Netherlands were acquired by the Museum last spring. Before they could be exhibited here, the Louvre, searching for the best examples available, asked to borrow both paintings for its extensive exhibition of still-life painting held in Paris last summer. The paintings, by Abraham van Beyeren (1621-1690) and Jan Davidsz de Heem (1606-1684) have now returned from France and have been placed on exhibit in Toledo.



STILL LIFE WITH LOBSTER AND FRUIT JAN DAVIDSZ DE HEEM (1606-1684)
GIFT OF EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY, 1952

Our renewed interest in still-life painting is a good example of how modern artists can influence our taste for the art of the past. For there are changes of taste in art just as there are in clothes, architecture and literature; and in the case of art, the contemporary artist often, and usually unconsciously, sets the pattern.

For the past eighty years artists have been more interested in the technical aspects of their work than in its subject matter. Monet was perfectly content in the 1880's to paint again and again the same haystack, and to Cezanne an apple was as good as a Madonna for the subject matter of a painting. This attitude on the part of the artist has persisted to the present, and we in turn have been more influenced than we think by it.

We can, because of this attitude, look at a picture as a painting—that is, consider the beauty of the paint on the framed rectangle of canvas without demanding that the picture tell us a story or move us emotionally. We can look at our two still-life paintings done by two artists whose language most of us can neither read nor understand, and without knowing about their lives, politics, or religion, enjoy the technical proficiency of men who could preserve for us the surface appearance of so much tangible luxury so carefully arranged despite its seemingly disordered profusion.

The very term still-life painting didn't come into common usage until about 1650, although artists from the time of the classic Greek painter Apelles have delighted in painting so realistically as to deceive the eye by the skill of the hand. Still-life first entered painting as descriptive and subordinate detail for religious compositions. Carefully painted books, inkwells, and other library appurtenances would often set the stage for paintings of the scholarly Saint Jerome in his study. Still-life later took on allegorical significance: the skull represented death, the hour-glass time, and the apple, fertility. By 1650, the period of our two paintings, with the waning of the power of the Church and the rise of a new form of wealthy middle-class society in northern Europe, pure still-life painting became immensely popular. In Holland alone there were some two hundred and fifty artists specializing in this kind of painting, and in Flanders, about one hundred.

The most eminent of the Flemish still-life artists was the Antwerp painter Jan Davidsz de Heem. Known especially for his painting of fruit at which he had excelled from this earliest period in Utrecht and Leyden, he later painted more sumptuous compositions such as our carefully composed picture containing silver, glass, a watch, food and drink, as well as fruit. Does not the watch indicate the transitory nature of all such material pleasures? Seventeenth century moralists delighted in such interpretations.

Abraham van Beyeren, a Dutch painter who worked at Delft and Amsterdam, was greatly influenced by the rich Flemish style of de Heem. Our painting by him is an exceptionally fine example of the warm colors and rich tones which he learned from the paintings of de Heem. Wealth and luxury are clearly implied in the handsome silver pitcher (in which you can see the reflection of the artist painting), the porcelain bowl which could only have come from China, a fine watch, and citrus fruits not native to cool Holland. It is a significant fact that the good Dutch burghers of the seventeenth century often referred to these elaborate compositions as "breakfast pieces."



STILL LIFE WITH WINE EWER
AND RED CLOTH

ABRAHAM VAN BEYEREN (1621-1690)

GIFT OF EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY, 1952



ANTIPHONARY

S. FRANCE OR N. SPAIN, XII CENTURY

LENT BY THE WALTERS ART GALLERY, BALTIMORE

MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE MUSIC MANUSCRIPTS

FROM JANUARY 11 TO MARCH 1 the Toledo Museum presents the first important showing of some of the great early illuminated manuscripts for their music, as well as art interest. Often overlooked is the fact that some of the finest illuminations were designed to appear with music. Superb books were created to serve the purposes of the church and for the pleasure of noblemen. Through manuscripts may also be traced the course of music wherever it has been written down.

In addition to showing some of the principal schools and periods of illumination, the story of notating music from its indeterminate beginnings in the Middle Ages to the threshold of modern notation at the end of the Renaissance, is illustrated by fine examples borrowed from museums, libraries, and private collections. They range in size from a few inches square to the mammoth books, large enough for the whole choir to sing from. The different liturgical books and a number of secular forms are represented, all decorated richly in gold and brilliant colors, some with large miniature paintings.

Some of the Museum's recent acquisitions in the field of music manuscripts will be exhibited for the first time. Among the important institutions which are lending material for the show are: the Pierpont Morgan Library; Library of Congress; Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore; Free Library of Philadelphia; Sibley Musical Library of the Eastman School of Music; Newberry Library, Chicago; Houghton Library, Harvard; National Gallery of Art, Rosenwald Collection; the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Cleveland Museum of Art; Detroit Institute of Arts, and Cincinnati Art Museum.

A fully documented catalog, with illustrations of some of the most important items, is available at \$1.00.

NEW ADULT CLASSES IN THE MUSEUM SCHOOL

ON JANUARY 28, Wednesday, new classes for adults will begin. You may register for them any time during January. Whether you are a beginner or have had some training, you will find a variety of courses open, either in studying the background of art and music, or in learning to make a work of art yourself.

"Home Furnishings" has been so popular that Mrs. Bippus is giving a more advanced class called "How to Furnish Your Home" which will meet on Thursday evenings from 7 to 9. You will work primarily with your own home decorating problems.

More and more people are discovering the pleasure of learning to paint in oil, casein, or watercolor. There are now two classes for beginning painters on Tuesday evenings, taught by Miss Young and Mr. Lotterman.

The Friday afternoon drawing class (for people with a year of drawing) has extended its activities to include lithography and you can try your hand at this interesting process of making your own prints. Plans for the second half of the year also include printing from woodblocks and etchings.

Art and music appreciation classes include a general course which surveys the arts from the Renaissance to contemporary times; a course dealing specifically with modern art; "Listening Workshop," which is an introduction to music through listening and discussion; and "Music of the Mid-Nineteenth Century" which covers the most important music written during that period.



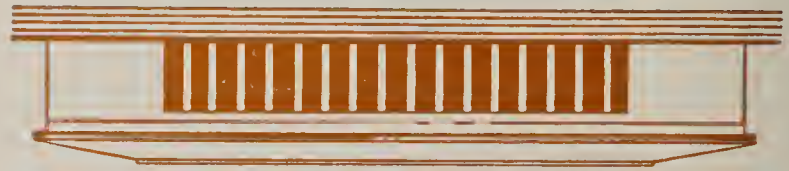
ADMISSION FREE AT ALL TIMES

OTHER DAYS : 9 A.M. - 5 P.M.

HOLIDAYS, 1 - 5 P.M.

HOURS : SUNDAYS, MONDAYS, AND

THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART
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TOLEDO 2, OHIO



JANUARY ACTIVITIES

EXHIBITIONS

MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE MUSIC MANUSCRIPTS

INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY DRAWINGS

WORK OF FACULTY OF MUSEUM SCHOOL OF DESIGN

LECTURES

Dr. Hans David, Professor of Musicology at the University of Michigan, will lecture Tuesday evening, January 20, at 7:30, on Guillaume de Machaut and his Times. Machaut, who lived from 1300 to 1377, was France's greatest composer-poet of the Gothic period. Dr. David will use slides and recordings made especially for his lecture.

CONCERTS

January 7 IMGARD SEEFRIED, SOPRANO—Peristyle Series

January 14 E. POWER BIGGS, ORGANIST

Presented with Toledo Chapter American Guild of Organists

January 25 ARTHUR LOESSER, PIANIST

January 29 CORELLI SOCIETY OF ROME—Gallery Series

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